



**STATEMENT BY THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY OBSERVATORY**

The 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Legal Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

**AGENDA ITEM 3: General Exchange of Views**

**Read by:** T. Kotzé (SKAO Head of Legal)

**Date :** 20 March 2023

Check against delivery.

Chair and distinguished delegates,

Thank you for allowing me the floor. On behalf of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Observatory (SKAO), I am pleased to address the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS. As this is the first time that I take the floor, please allow me to congratulate you Chair on your election and assure you of our cooperation in this session.

Chair,

The Square Kilometre Array Observatory (the “SKAO”) is the international intergovernmental organization created via a multilateral constitutive *Convention Establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory* as the legal entity to drive the Square Kilometre Array project (the ‘SKA’), envisaged as one of the largest ever scientific projects. On 5 December 2022, the SKAO Construction Commencement Ceremonies were held simultaneously in our three sites, marking a new era for the project: the formal start of construction of what will be the most advanced radio telescope in the world. This followed eighteen months of preparatory activities to ensure that construction can begin with the consent and support of the indigenous peoples in regions where the SKA will be sited. In addition, the effort of the global SKA community since the approval of construction activities in June 2021 has enabled the award of 475 million Euros of contracts, covering major infrastructure and the antennas for both the SKA-Low frequency and SKA-Mid frequency telescopes, located in Australia and South Africa respectively.

Chair,

The SKAO is headquartered in the United Kingdom, and the collection of scientific data will take place via our instrument(s) situated in promulgated Radio-Quiet Zones (RQZs) in Australia and South Africa. Our governing Council Members are Australia, China, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom; And our Council Observers are Canada, France, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, Spain, and Sweden. We also have cooperation agreements with scientific institutions in other countries. All our Members, Cooperating Partners, and Observers are active in UNCOUOS.

Chair,

We are deeply appreciative for the Symposium organized by the International Institute of Space Law and the European Centre for Space Law on the theme “Legal aspects of a dark and quiet sky”. Ensuring the preservation of our near-Earth environment in order to undertake radio and optical astronomy from the ground, and also to ensure its preservation for society more generally, is a matter of considerable concern to SKAO and its Council.

Chair,

We will give statements under agenda item 7, *National legislation relevant to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space*, and agenda item 14, *General exchange of views on the application of international law to small-satellite activities*.

I thank you, chair.